

Sinn Fein Determined to Get England Out of Ireland for Good

Leaders Willing to Go to Any Extreme to Bring About Freedom of Emerald Isle From British Control in Any Form; Not Pro-German, Say Griffith and De Valera, but Anti-English.

AMERICA LOOKED UPON WITH DISDAIN

Star-Spangled Banner and Moving Picture of West Point Cadets Bring Hisses; Extremists Have No Faith in Convention Now Being Held.

(By JOHN LLOYD BALDERSTON.)
DUBLIN, Sept. 9.—After as close an investigation as circumstances permitted into the present organization and activities of the Sinn Fein or Republican party, in Ireland, I have been struck by two facts of interest to the American authorities.
1. By the implied admission of the leaders of Sinn Fein, Arthur Griffith and Eamonn de Valera, the organization remains actively anti-British and in as close touch and co-operation with Germany as possible.
2. By the admission of the same two men, who have just been released from prison, Sinn Fein still receives money from Irish-Americans in the United States.

Griffith, the founder of Sinn Fein, its executive head prior to the Easter week revolt, and de Valera, the young

hero whose sensational victory at the East Clare election has made him the real leader of Sinn Fein, today permitted me to interview them. To both I put the same question: "Am I then justified in assuming that American money which your organization received is being used to plot against Great Britain, in connivance with the enemies of Great Britain and of the United States?"

Not Pro-German.

Griffith and de Valera both replied by repudiating the suggestion, which both seemed to resent, that they are pro-German. De Valera said: "England is in occupation of our country. Until she removes her troops, Ireland and England are in a state of war. While we are in a state of war,

England's enemies must be Ireland's friends."

Griffith was more cautious. "Our appeal is to the peace conference," he said. "The question of the use of force against the enemy is purely one of expediency." He denied to the press his relations, if any, with the Germans, but said, like de Valera, "I am not pro-German. But Germany is the enemy of England, and England is my enemy. You may draw your own conclusions."

"How do you get money from America?" I asked de Valera. "We have our ways," he answered evasively.

Sinn Fein Has Strong Hold.

A stranger has only to walk the streets of Dublin half an hour to learn what an extraordinary hold the Sinn Fein propaganda has upon the mass of the population. The Nationalist party, one is told by members of all factions, is practically dead. Joseph Devlin, the Ulster Nationalist leader, told me that if an election were held tomorrow the Nationalists would lose half their seats to Sinn Fein. The Sinn Feiners themselves claim they would win every Nationalist seat in Ireland away from the Redmondites and gain several constituencies now Unionist.

Meanwhile the convention, which is repudiated by Sinn Fein, is in session, and Orangemen and Nationalists are coming together to meet the common menace of anarchy and civil war which they believe the Sinn Fein program holds in store for the country if the Republican party secures control.

It seems strange to hear counsels of moderation and appeals for law and order from the Ulster and Nationalist factions which three years ago were marching troops about and threatening war to the knife. But there was a good deal of bluff in the Carson military preparations, and in the counter preparations south of the Boyne, and most moderate Irishmen are aware that there is no bluff about Sinn Fein. The present leaders have "gone up on the roof," as they say in Dublin, against the whole might of the British empire once, and they say with engaging frankness that, if they cannot obtain complete independence in any other way, they intend to do so again.

Arms Smuggled From Germany.

Since the suppression of the Dublin revolt, which was planned to extend all over the country, but went off at half-cock, it seems probable from all I can learn that arms have been smuggled to the Sinn Feiners from Germany by means of cargo submarines, which put in lonely bays on the almost deserted west coast. This is widely believed to be true in Dublin. I have been assured by prominent members of the convention that they know of German arms imported in this manner. The Sinn Fein leaders themselves, with all their remarkable willingness to discuss their plans and position, refused to tell me whether Hindenburg is helping them out with rifles or machine guns, hand grenades, flame-throwers or cylinders of poison gas weapons, all of which figure in Dublin rumor.

Ireland is under martial law. There is something comic in the Sinn Fein complaints of militarism and oppression against the British method of handling the situation here. I discussed the situation briefly with Gen. Sir Bryan Mahon, commander-in-chief of the considerable British forces in Ireland, but am not at liberty to quote him. Two illustrations will show to what extremes the authorities are going in their desire not to provoke the Sinn Feiners.

Then the first two days of the convention no British flag was flying in central Dublin. But a block away from the convention hall some Irish Barbara Freitche had flung to the breeze a Republican flag of red, green and white. It fluttered over the heads of the delegates as they walked to their deliberations. No attempt was made to remove it.

Griffith Defiant.

Over the front of the building occupied since his release from his life sentence for treason by Arthur Griffith at Harcourt street are stretched in large brass letters the words, "Sinn Fein bank," and Mr. Griffith and his friends there edit and publish the official organ of Sinn Fein, now called "Nationality," which continues its propaganda with a certain regard for the censorship, but no concealment of its sentiments and aims.

Only one grievance against the martial law now enforced in Ireland can be expressed against the castle authorities today that was not available before the Dublin revolt. The Sinn Fein soldiers are no longer allowed to drill in the streets, dig trenches in the city parks or rehearse undisturbed their planned attacks on Dublin castle and other strategic points, as they did in the early months of 1916.

The facts about Sinn Fein appear to be that it is led by the survivors of the leaders of the Easter week rebellion, that it is spreading its organization all over southern Ireland and gaining an alarming rate, that its principal doctrine is the use of force to obtain national independence and that it repudiates anything short of a complete separation from the British empire.

It was to obtain from the leaders some explanation of the policy and program of Sinn Fein that I went to them. Arthur Griffith I found in his office on the second floor of the Sinn Fein Bank building. It has not been many days since he was released from his life sentence for treason; it is said that he owes his life to the fact that, at the last moment, he tried to prevent the rebellion. He talked to me with cold passion about England, quoting broken agreements and atrocities and acts of extortion extending over past centuries. "Do you not," I asked, "make any distinction between the Tory and Liberal parties in England, or do you not admit that English feeling towards Ireland has changed in modern times?"

Always the Same.

"No," he said. "England is always the same. Tory or Liberal, Labor or Pacifist, they are all alike. We trust none of them. When England is weak, she offers us concessions. Hence this convention. When England is strong, she takes back what she gave us when she was weak. That is the history of Ireland."

"What is the Sinn Fein political program?" I asked Mr. Griffith. "Our strength is that we have no program," he answered. "It is wrong to speak of an Irish republic. Sinn Fein is not committed to a republic. Some of us would prefer an Irish monarchy. We represent all shades of political theory. Sinn Fein has no connection with any class, or with the Catholic church. Our one aim is to get the enemy, the army of occupation, out of Ireland. When that is done, Sinn Fein will dissolve,

political parties will come into existence and we can lead our normal life as a nation."

"How do you reconcile your present political campaign, your fight for seats in the English parliament, with your old doctrine of boycotting the English rule by not recognizing it?" I asked.

"The Sinn Fein executive," Mr. Griffith said, "is not an elected body. It could not be. We must prove to Ireland and to the world that we have the support of the people of

Ireland. For that reason it is necessary to contest these seats and to win them. No Sinn Fein member of course, will ever take his seat at Westminster."

Moulding Future Rulers.

"But there is another and more important reason why we must elect members of parliament. They form the nucleus of the body that will take over the government of Ireland. From them will be chosen the delegates who at the peace conference will demand

that the claims of Ireland be considered together with those of other small and weak nations. Our Sinn Fein members are the future rulers of Ireland, elected by the Irish people, who understand what they are doing, under the forms and by the machinery kindly provided by the English government. When a Sinn Feiner contests a seat with a Nationalist, the issue is this: The Nationalist asks the people to send him to the British parliament. We ask the people, by voting for our candidate, to pronounce

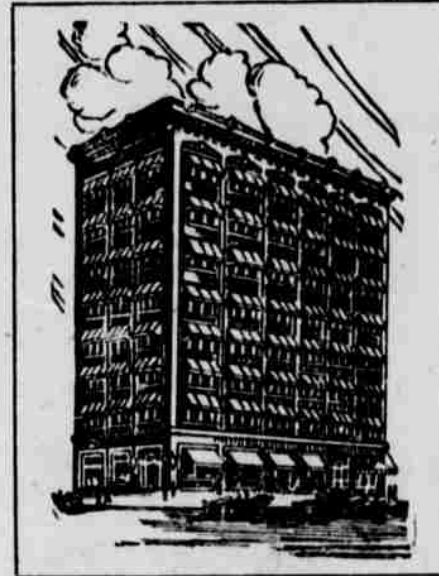
for independence and withdraw themselves from English rule, electing instead a man who will represent them in the government of Ireland."

We discussed the future of an independent Ireland. Mr. Griffith contended that Germany and the United States would support an independent Ireland because "he who commands Ireland commands the sea power of the Atlantic," and the interest of Germany and America, Mr. Griffith in-

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